

## Lesson Plan for Bitter End by Jennifer Brown by Kathryn Rodriguez

**PURPOSE:** To understand what teen dating abuse is and how young people are affected by it.

**STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- \*Identify the forms of dating abuse
- \*Understand the role of the abuser, target and bystander in teen dating abuse
- \*Describe steps that a bystander can take to help someone who is a target of dating abuse

**MATERIALS:** Book – Bitter End by Jennifer Brown and their personal journals

Handout – What is Teen Dating Abuse

Handout – Roles in Dating Abuse: Abuser, Target and Bystander

Handout – Helping a Friend or Family Member who is Being Abused

### ACTIVITIES:

Ask the students how they felt about Alex and Cole's relationship

Define dating abuse which includes students' responses and "Teen dating abuse is a pattern of physically, sexually, verbally and/or emotionally abusive or controlling behavior in a dating relationship." Discuss the handout on Teen Dating Abuse

Ask students how Alex experienced dating abuse

Discuss ways they have seen friends or family members experience abuse in a dating relationship

Ask students to think about different ways dating abuse can occur, whether in person, on Facebook, Twitter, text messages, asking others to convey messages, etc. Write on board their responses.

Ask students to think about how Alex and other people they know FEEL when dating abuse occurs. Write on board their responses.

Ask students to describe what may be some of the effects of dating abuse on the person who experiences it – for instance engaging in self harm, becoming depressed, being ashamed or confused, etc.

Handout and define the roles of abuser, target and bystander and discuss how bystanders may not always be present, but may know about the abuse. Discuss that both boys and girls can be both the target and abuser.

Discuss ways to identify abusive and controlling behavior. How was Cole controlling towards Alex?

Ask students who they think could be a bystander to teen dating abuse

Give each student a copy of "Helping a friend or family member who is being abused." Review handout and pair students. Ask them to write a letter to Alex, as though she was their friend. Ask for volunteers to read their letters to the class.

**CONCLUSION:** Summarize points from the discussions. Ask students to write in their journals about this question: Why was it hard for Alex to end her relationship with Cole?

Reference: [Loveisnotabuse.com](http://Loveisnotabuse.com)

# HANDOUT

## WHAT IS TEEN DATING ABUSE?

Teen dating abuse is a pattern of physically, sexually, verbally, and/or emotionally abusive or controlling behavior in a dating relationship. It can involve digital communications and technologies or real world communications and physical interactions.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Any unwanted contact with the other person's body. Physical abuse does not have to leave a mark or a bruise.

#### Examples:

- Scratching
- Pinching
- Strangling
- Shoving
- Punching
- Burning
- Pushing
- Physical restraint
- Biting
- Pulling hair
- Using a weapon
- Spitting
- Kicking
- Choking
- Slapping

### SEXUAL ABUSE

Any sexual behavior that is unwanted or interferes with the other person's right to say "no" to sexual advances.

#### Examples:

- Unwanted kissing or touching
- Date rape
- Forcing someone to go further sexually than he or she wants to
- Unwanted rough or violent sexual activity
- Not letting someone use birth control or protection against sexually transmitted infections
- Forcing someone to pose for still or video images while partially or fully nude or while performing sexual acts
- Forcing someone to watch others engaging in sexual acts in real life or in still or video images
- Coercing someone to take nude or sexual images of him/herself and share them
- Forcing someone to expose him/herself sexually to others or in public
- Forcing someone to wear or not wear items of clothing (such as underwear)
- Videotaping or recording a sexual act or nude image of someone without their knowledge or consent
- Sending someone unsolicited and unwelcomed sexual images
- Altering an image of a person to make it appear that they were posing in the nude or engaging in sexual activities

# HANDOUT

## VERBAL/EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Saying or doing something to the other person that causes the person to be afraid and/or have lower self-esteem. Trying to manipulate or control the person's feelings or behaviors. This can include online posts or digital communications designed to threaten, harass, or embarrass someone.

These can take place in real life or through the use of digital technologies, such as social networks, online games, email, text-messages, videos, photo-sharing and video-sharing sites, webcams, digital gaming devices, and instant messaging.

### Examples:

- Name-calling and put-downs
- Insulting the person or his/her family or friends
- Yelling and screaming
- Harming (or threatening to harm) the person or his/her family, friends, pets or property
- Making racial, ethnic or religious slurs about the person or those he/she cares for
- Making unwanted comments/sending unwanted messages of a sexual nature to the person
- Signing the person up for unwanted websites or services
- Sending the person pornographic videos, images or media
- Embarrassing the person in front of others
- Intimidating the person
- Spreading negative rumors about the person
- Preventing the person from seeing or talking to friends and family
- Telling the person what to do
- Making the person feel responsible for the violence/abuse
- Stalking
- Making the person feel guilty about wanting to leave the relationship by talking about the abuser's hard life and how alone and abandoned the abuser will feel if left
- Threatening to commit suicide
- Threatening to kill the target or a friend/family member of the target
- Threatening to expose personal information about the person (e.g., sexual orientation, immigration status, embarrassing secrets)
- Threatening to take away the person's child or children
- Sharing sexual or nude pictures of the person that were given in confidence
- Excessive or unwanted text-messaging, instant messaging, phone calls or emails to check up on someone
- Posting fake or altered images of someone or "photoshopping" a person's images to add or remove others from pictures
- Creating an abusive group or profile about someone, such as the "Katy is a slut" group or setting the person up for attacks by others online
- Posting nasty, false or abusive comments on the person's profile or other accounts or in their guestbook
- Accessing someone's accounts and changing the passwords so he or she no longer has access to them and/or posing as the person and altering his or her accounts and profiles

## **ROLES IN DATING ABUSE: ABUSER, TARGET AND BYSTANDER.**

**ABUSER:** A person who physically, sexually, verbally, or emotionally hurts or attempts to control an intimate partner.

**TARGET:** A person who is subjected to controlling behavior or hurt physically, sexually, verbally, or emotionally by an intimate partner.

**BYSTANDER:** A person who is aware or suspects that someone is being abused in a dating relationship. The bystander may become aware of the abuse through the abuser's or the target's actions or words.

# HANDOUT

## HELPING A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS BEING ABUSED

- Tell the person who is being abused that you are concerned for his or her safety. Make it clear that you know about the abuse, and that you are concerned. Tell your friend or relative that he or she does not deserve to be abused.
- Acknowledge that the abuse is not this person's fault. Remind the friend or relative that the abuser is responsible for the abuse. Tell the person that he or she is not alone.
- Be supportive and patient. It may be difficult for the person to talk about the abuse. Let your friend or relative know that you are available to listen or help any time.
- Avoid judging your friend or family member. The person may break up with and go back to the abuser many times before finally leaving the relationship. Do not criticize your friend or relative for doing this, even if you disagree with the choices he or she makes.
- Encourage the person to talk to others who can provide help and guidance. Offer to help the person talk to family, friends, a teacher or staff person at school, or a member of the clergy; or to help them find a counselor or support group. If your friend or relative decides to go to the police, to court, or to see a lawyer, offer to come along, but make sure you don't do the talking when you get there.
- Help the person to develop a practical and specific safety plan that focuses on preventing future harm or abuse. Visit [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org) to download the High School Safety Planning guide.
- Do not confront the abuser during an act of violence; it could be dangerous for you and your friend or relative. It is best to call the police or get help from an adult in this situation. However, if it feels safe to do so, you can let a friend know if you think his or her words or behavior is hurtful or controlling and encourage that person to get help.
- Remember that you cannot "rescue" the person who is the target of abuse. It is difficult to see someone you care about get hurt. Your friend or relative must be the one to decide what to do. Your job is to be supportive.

Adapted from Break the Cycle, Inc. 2005. [breakthecycle.org](http://breakthecycle.org)

**DIRECTIONS:** Imagine that you are a friend or relative of Adaliz and that you knew that Richard was abusing her. Work with a partner to write a letter to Adaliz in which you reach out to help her. As you write, keep in mind the suggestions that are listed above.